

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

SAM-01 SAB-01 AID-05 IO-10 /080 W

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R 031130Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2538

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 0367

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, SY

SUBJECT: VISIT OF FRENCH ASSEMBLY PRES. FAURE TO SYRIA

1. SUMMARY. PRINCIPAL RESULTS OF FAURE'S JAN 22-26 VISIT WERE STRENGTHENING OF FRENCH-SYRIAN CULTURAL TIES. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT OF FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY EDGAR FAURE MADE OFFICIAL VISIT TO SYRIA JAN 22-26. FRENCH EMBASSY SOURCE PROVIDED FOLLOWING RUNDOWN.

3. INVITATION WAS EXTENDED BY SYRIAN AMBASSADOR IN PARIS WHEN HE LEARNED OF TIME GAP BETWEEN FAURE'S PROJECTED VISITS TO LEBANON AND IRAN. SYRIANS DID NOT REALIZE THAT FAURE WAS VISITING REGION PRIVATELY AS VICE PRESIDENT OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FRENCH-SPEAKING PARLIAMENTARIANS (AIPLF) AND INVITED HIM IN OFFICIAL CAPACITY.

4. UPON ARRIVAL AT LEBANESE-SYRIAN FRONTIER JAN 22, FAURE TOLD THAT SINCE VIRTUALLY ENTIRE CABINET AND PARLIAMENT HAD GONE TO LATAKIA FOR FUNERAL OF PRES. ASAD'S BROTHER, THERE WAS NO SCHEDULE. ON JAN 24, CONFIDENTIAL

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HOWEVER, PRES. ASAD MADE HIS PERSONAL AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE

TO FAURE TO VISIT ALEPPO AND PALMYRA.

5. OVER WEEKEND, FAURE HAD MEETINGS WITH FONMIN KHADDAM, PRIMIN AYOUBI AND PRES. PEOPLES' ASSEMBLY HALABI DURING WHICH HE DISCUSSED CURRENT ME SITUATION AND FRENCH POLICIES. WITH EACH, EMBASSY SOURCE SAID, FAURE SPOKE OF "HISTORIC CONSISTENCY OF STATE OF ISRAEL AND ITS RIGHT TO EXIST." REMARK UNFORTUNATELY HAD ANGERED KHADDAM WHO HAD RETORTED THAT STATE OF ISRAEL EVEN WITHIN 1948 LINES WAS UNJUSTIFIABLE.

6. ONLY CONCRETE RESULT OF VISIT WAS SYRIAN AGREEMENT TO CONSIDER PARTICIPATION IN AIPLF. AFTER INITIAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN DENIAU OF FAURE'S DELEGATION AND FRANCOPHONE DEPUTIES GHASSAN CHALHOUB AND SALMA NAGIB, ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT HALABI AGREED THAT SYRIA WOULD SEND TWO OR THREE OBSERVERS TO ASSOCIATION'S APRIL SESSION IN PARIS. EMBASSY SOURCE COMMENTED THAT ONLY FIVE OR SIX DEPUTIES TRULY SPOKE FRENCH, ALTHOUGH ANOTHER TWENTY WERE REASONABLY FLKNNT.

7. MOST SATISFYING MEETING FOR FAURE WAS GET-TOGETHER WITH SOME FORTY FRENCH-SPEAKING DEANS AND FACULTY MEMBERS OF DAMASCUS UNIVERSITY. FAURE HAD EXPANDED ON CONCEPT OF FRENCH-SPEAKING PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION AND SUGGESTED BROAD BASED FRANCO-ARAB DIALOGUE INCLUDING INTELLECTUALS, ARTISTS AND PROFESSIONAL GROUPS.

8. COMMENT. DESPITE SCHEDULE DISRUPTIONS, FRENCH APPEARED PLEASED WITH RESULTS OF VISIT. THEY VIEWED ASAD'S HAVING PUT PERSONAL PLANE AT FAURE'S DISPOSAL AS GESTURE OF APPRECIATION FOR FRANCE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD ARABS AND INDICATION OF REGRET THAT HE COULD NOT HIMSELF RECEIVE VISITOR. THEY WERE ALSO PARTICULARLY PLEASED WITH CULTURAL ASPECTS OF VISIT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CLOSER CULTURAL ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SYRIA AND FRANCE.  
MURPHY

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